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ARMS CONTROL: STRATEGY FOR THE EAST?

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Assigned to

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11-17-59

-1-

ARMS CONTROL: STRATEGY FOR THE EAST?

If we cooperate, a premeditated first strike against the United States could become cheap and safe; in which case the Russians might buy themselves a first-strike force and use it. But if we took steps to make that course look highly risky and expensive, the Russians might decide against it. use? Would they still need a first-strike force?

fk The United States might, in their place. There is the motive of insurance: the ability of a "first-strike" force to lessen damage in case a war does occur by pre-empting an enemy about to attack, and/or by counterforce action against the attacker's later waves.¹ (Though in a world where premeditated first strikes had become unpromising, the insurance bonus of a counterforce system would also have declined.) More important, some argue, is the U.S. need for "Type II deterrence." Apart from any desire to use our offensive force, it is argued, we need it to threaten. The United States presently relies heavily upon the threat to strike first, for two different jobs: to deter "extreme provocations" (other than an attack on the United States), such as invasion of Europe or peripheral areas; and if limited war should arise, to keep it limited. So long as other means are lacking to achieve these objectives, the United States will continue to rely on these threats. To make them credible, it must

¹Virtually all "second-strike forces" -- e.g., Polaris submarines -- would also have this ability, in some degree. The separation between "first-strike" and "second-strike" forces cannot be drawn too sharply, and some of those who first promoted the distinction have now begun to disparage it. I will present a counter-argument in favor of the separation later; meanwhile, let us proceed on the assumption that a strategic offensive system optimized to meet the demands of a first strike will look considerably different from one designed primarily to retaliate.

11-17-59

-2-

maintain at least the facade of a first-strike capability which could limit damage to the United States in case of a U.S. first strike.

Do the Russians need Type II deterrence? It is easier to imagine the Russians than the Americans actually using a first-strike force, if that looked promising. But do they need so urgently to threaten its use, as a means of controlling U.S. behavior? I suspect that they do not. If not, they may have less motive than the United States for expanding and maintaining a first-strike force which they do not presently propose to use in a premeditated first strike. In fact, given the costs and risks of maintaining such a force, they might consider it a net liability: if they did not actually see themselves conducting a well-planned, carefully-executed first strike. Given the last condition, they might have good reason to come up with genuine, carefully implemented proposals to limit the mutual feasibility of surprise attack (without jeopardizing the mutual ability to retaliate). In fact, in certain circumstances, they might go much further than proposals, even unilaterally.

The purpose of the U.S. nuclear threats against the Soviet Union is to prevent certain undesirable transformations of the status quo. To achieve those transformations, the Soviets need by no means rely upon similar threats. If military pressure is needed at all, the threat of attack with conventional arms, backed up by tactical nuclear capability (which might serve mainly to deter tactical nuclear defense), might be adequate. If that failed, direct use of conventional weapons, with or without tactical nuclear weapons, would, at present, promise victory. The main problem would be precisely to muzzle the U.S. Type II threat, to deter the United States from carrying the conflict to the ZI of the Soviet Union; and this is a job for SU Type I deterrence, SU second-strike or

the
reality!

But the
doubt!

(C-II-
the
opposite!)

11-17-59

-3-

retaliatory capability.

As for the problem of keeping limited wars from growing "too large," this concerns the United States especially because such wars would be fought principally on the territory of our allies. Both the United States and the Soviet Union have an interest in keeping the limited war from expanding into attacks on each other's ZI's, but for that, again, each relies upon its own Type I deterrent. The U.S. interest in keeping the war limited far short of that point (for which it draws upon a Type II threat, the possibility of being "provoked" into striking first) is to keep it from annihilating our ally. That goal is less important for the Soviets.

Thus, there may be an asymmetry in the contribution made by a first-strike threat-capability to the strategic objectives of Russia or the United States. Such a capability might be relatively less an asset to the Soviet Union. Now let us consider its liabilities.

The relevant index of a first-strike capability is its ability to limit damage to the attacker from the opponent's retaliation, in the course of achieving a military victory. To the extent that a threatener succeeds in lowering the costs to himself of striking first (so as to make his threats more convincing), he may look more likely than before to strike even if the opponent were to make some effort to avoid "provoking" him. In other words, the strategic capability which the threatener acquires to support his threats can make him look dangerous even in situations not covered by his threats. This may prove a costly development; for if the opponent has any significant first-strike capability, it may motivate him

11-17-59

-4-

to launch a preventive attack.¹

Such an increased risk, if any, would count as a cost to the United States of a major program to improve the credibility of its first-strike threat. If it were acceptable (which proponents of "minimum deterrence" would deny) it would be because of the offsetting rewards of deterring peripheral aggression and containing limited war. Whatever its costs, the policy might (as Herman Kahn argues) be essential to the United States.

Yet to the Soviet Union, the same program might appear at most a "luxury": and a dangerous one at that. Consider, particularly, a situation in which the United States had acquired a sizeable ability to go first, approximating the posture that Kahn has recommended. The Russians expect, desire, and plan to produce transformations in the world order which would give the United States powerful incentive to use that capability. Walter Lippmann concluded from his interview that Khrushchev believes that "if the United States finds that it is going to lose the Cold War, it is likely to resort to hot war." "It is an article of his faith," Lippmann reports, "that the West will attack rather than lose the contest for world leadership by default."² One implication of such a belief, which Lippmann *entirely missed*, is that Khrushchev would have strong motivation to strike first. But suppose that he were deterred from this course by U.S. retaliatory power. His alternative would be to reduce the U.S. incentives to strike. He would have three sorts of means:

¹The threatener might try to offset this effect by simultaneously building up his second-strike, retaliatory power. But it would not be unlikely that the opponent would find his increased first-strike force more reliable-looking and ominous than his retaliation.

²Lippmann, The Communist World and Ours, Boston, 1958, pp. 22-23.

related a) Build up a large, relatively invulnerable retaliatory force; this must, undoubtedly, bear the major burden of his deterrent.

R did b) Forego those Cold War (and "little hot war") victories which would motivate a U.S. strike; or

c) Offset their effect upon U.S. behavior by reducing other U.S. incentives to strike first. Chief among these would be the U.S. fear of being struck, eventually, by the Soviet Union.

R should have
(He acted on this, but didn't believe, however!)
(another form of Singapore Forward)

If Khrushchev did not, in fact, plan to strike the United States within the immediate future (5-10 years) he could the more easily "afford" to eliminate (if feasible) U.S. fear of such an attack. And he could not afford not to, if he proposed meanwhile to have his "victories." Given the "provocations" which the Soviets expect to promote, the SU retaliatory system will inevitably confront strong U.S. incentives to strike. Added to those incentives, a U.S. fear -- induced by SU threats, aggressive action and first-strike capability -- of an SU first strike against the United States could prove overwhelming. The Soviets might have reasons even stronger than our own to relieve the strain on their Type I deterrence by foregoing first-strike threats, if they could possibly do without them: as they can.

In some circumstances it is even possible to imagine the Soviets taking unilateral steps to "disarm" their first-strike capability. Suppose that a limited war erupted in Western Europe (perhaps starting in a revolt in the satellites, or conflict between East and West Germany), and the time seemed favorable for a military invasion of West Europe. It has been suggested (at least implicitly, by Herman Kahn) that the Soviets might try to frighten the United States and NATO from putting up a strong defense, by posing the threat of an all-out strike; and that they might support this threat by

? (Worse Post uprisings)

yes!

11-17-59

-6-

such "provocations" as jamming or destroying links in the DEWline, massive spoofing of our early warning, sinking Polaris submarines and carrying out strategic evacuation of Russian cities.

Such measures, by demonstrating recklessness and resolve and by improving their first-strike capability, would indeed make their threat more credible. They would also give the United States the strongest possible motivation (if any more were needed) to pre-empt immediately. Facing even a weak U.S. capability to strike first, would not this effect on U.S. incentives be the last in the world the Russians would want to promote? At a moment when they were already "pushing" the United States by looming over Europe, such additional "provocations" would be the most reliable way possible to increase the likelihood of a U.S. first strike: just when the primary Russian strategic problem would be to reduce that likelihood. In comparison with the latter aim, the hope of detering U.S. resistance in Europe would be a frill, easily dispensable. It is the United States, not the Soviet Union, which finds it crucial to deter resistance on the ground. The Soviet Union is preparing to meet and over-power local opposition.¹

In this crisis situation, we might find the Soviets pursuing a policy exactly opposite to the one suggested. We might find them taking extraordinary -- and persuasive -- measures to convince us that they were not

C-II: non-alent

¹It would still be advantageous for the Soviet Union to deter all ground opposition from NATO or individual victims, if possible; a "peaceful" take-over would be less likely than a bloody battle to incite a strategic response from the United States or from European strategic weapons, if any. Thus, nuclear blackmail against lesser opponents might be rewarding. But against the United States it might be a much less promising policy.

11-17-59

-7-

planning to strike the United States (just as Hitler, in invading Austria, not only gave explicit assurance to Italy and to Czechoslovakia, but invited inspection of the fact that his troops were obeying orders to stay well clear of the Czechoslovak frontier). They might come up with arrangements for bringing in UN (even U.S.!) observers and supplying them with communication and observation facilities. Instead of jamming the DEWline, they might allow infrared detection of missile takeoffs within their own territory, or, if this is technically possible, facilitate (or refrain from jamming) long-range detection schemes. Inspection of advanced staging bases or forward missile sites might be allowed.

All these measures would improve U.S. first-strike ability (i.e., reduce SU retaliatory ability), as well as reducing SU first-strike capability; and they would lower SU second-strike "insurance." Nevertheless, having gone on full ground alert and having protected the more invulnerable part of their retaliatory force from compromise, their retaliatory capability might still remain highly formidable. The marginal improvement in U.S. first-strike ability might be more than compensated by the sudden reduction in U.S. incentives to strike, given an unworied and convincing demonstration that the Russians themselves had no incentive to strike first. Merely refraining from strategic evacuation of Russian cities (without reducing their offensive force at all!) might, in the mid-Sixties, be highly convincing evidence of their inability seriously to limit damage to the Soviet Union by striking first.¹

¹Herman Kahn has argued that strategic evacuation of cities -- carried out in the course of a crisis situation -- must, in the mid-Sixties, be the heart of a really effective first-strike "counterforce" strategy.

US
JAC.
FS

A sudden need for the Russians to reassure the United States about their intentions has been mentioned by previous writers, in connection with a "brink of war" situation in which the United States had strong reason to fear Soviet pre-emption; or in which the United States might have issued a disarmament ultimatum as an alternative to a preventive attack. I am suggesting a different context for their moves, in which the feared U.S. attack might be prompted not by pre-emptive motives but by Soviet aggression in progress. The Russian temporary abandonment of a first-strike capability would thus be an adjunct of an offensive strategy: equivalent in aim to an announced limitation of objective, a reduction of the price the victim is asked to pay.

There would be serious difficulties in providing convincing evidence, on short notice, that the United States was not in immediate danger of being struck; though prior planning by the Russians might go a long way toward reducing those problems. And, of course, these measures would not buy perfect assurance that the United States would not strike anyway, if the Russians proceeded into Europe. At best, they would supplement the Russian deterrent posture, the major burden being placed on their remaining retaliatory capability. Nevertheless, even this hasty and unilateral "disarmament" program might look preferable, at that moment, to an attitude of menace.

And it might be impressively effective, particularly if it were not made to look temporary. Always working against the influence of reassuring moves would be the thought in U.S. minds: "What about next month? Next year?" It might be worth a great deal to the Russians, at that moment, to allay that fear. The prize might be Europe.

11-17-59

-9-

X At that moment, what is to be deterred is not U.S. resistance, but specifically, a U.S. first strike against Russia. Given a formidable SU retaliatory capability and the inescapable uncertainties of nuclear war, it would take a great deal to persuade the United States to launch a first all-out strike; but a fear -- well-founded on Russian capability and aggressive action -- of an eventual SU strike against the United States might well be enough. And without that fear, nothing might be enough. *yes*

It would be even harder to reduce that fear for a long period than for a short; yet again, prior planning might make it look possible. They could not, in any case, guarantee that they would never again acquire a first-strike capability; and the costs of giving up that capability even for five or ten years might seem great. But to repeat, the stakes might be enormous: domination in Europe. What greater role could a Russian first-strike capability play than to secure such a bargain without major war? Might they not have good reason to hope that such staggering "concessions" -- genuine, secured, triple-inspected guarantees that the United States was "safe" for a significant interval -- would stay a United States already hesitating before the awful costs of nuclear war? Such moves might not only be expected to "compensate" for the loss of Europe, (a Europe which might not at that moment be in the least anxious to trigger all-out nuclear war, if the Russians were advancing with conventional arms); they would be just the sort of "compensations" that would reduce our incentive to strike most sharply, contrasting the uncertainties of nuclear war with a relatively certain (though unfavorable) "peace." The thought in the mind of a U.S. decision-maker would now be (if the Soviets

* Suppose: SU acquired a McKinnis-Gow non-nuc blitz with resources against SU FS, even ?
(It doesn't!)

11-17-59

-10-

fronted - does unilateral an
FS Cap - first strike was needed to preserve (to preserve) (to preserve) (to preserve)
an FS threat! possibility (we) (we) (we) (we)
 were successful): "There will be no major nuclear war¹... unless I start
 it." *don't!*

SS-12

yes In short, a unilateral Russian disarmament of their first-strike *(but it's)*
capability might effectively "disarm" the United States of its first-strike *deliberate*
 threat. It could make that threat much less credible, less likely to be *too nice*
 effective; hence, make the United States less willing to commit itself to *defense!*
 carrying it out. And if the occasion arose, the costs of carrying it out *But -*
 might seem heavy indeed. Given a situation where the United States had *deliberation!*
 strong incentives to strike first (based on a combination of moderate-to-
 strong first-strike capability² and highly "provocative" events in Europe),
 this "disarming" policy might be the best move the Russians could make. *yes - but*
the doubt

But if, looking ahead, the Russians could foresee occasions when
 even a hasty, unilateral divestiture of their first-strike threat could
 be advantageous, how much better would seem a carefully-constructed, bi-
lateral agreement! In peacetime, with no pressure of events, there is
 scarcely a need for Russia to "give" the United States these assurances
 unilaterally; they could expect to exact all manner of rewards. At the
 least, they would hope to inhibit U.S. capability, in addition to U.S.
 incentives, to wage preventive war. The reason that I have stressed the
 extreme possibility that even unilateral action might seem advantageous
 to the Soviets (in inhibiting U.S. motivation to attack) is to underline

¹I.e., within the planning horizon: about four years?

²If, in the mid-Sixties, the United States had virtually no first-
 strike ability in face of the Russian retaliatory capability, pre-emption
 would not be a strong motive for a U.S. strike, and Russia would have
 little to gain by reassuring the United States about its intentions. The
 Russian policy I am suggesting would be one prompted by a significant effort
 by the United States to maintain or improve its first-strike capability.

we did

11-17-59

-11-

the fact that they might regard quite genuine, fully-implemented proposals for bilateral arms control as relatively riskless, involving at worst negligible (or negative!) cost.¹ They might "lead the way" with dramatic, unilateral gestures. Taking the initiative in negotiations, they might brush away minor disagreements, making startling concessions, and, enlisting the support of public opinion in Europe, the uncommitted countries and the United States itself, sweep unprepared U.S. negotiators into an arms control pact that eliminated U.S. Type II deterrence and provided a minimum of compensation.

JK
doubt —
W
all G

If the United States started seriously down the road to a highly effective first-strike capability for the Sixties, I think that the Soviets might well adopt the counterstrategy above; and I think that it might well succeed, leaving the United States naked of means to deter aggression in third areas if it had not meanwhile armed itself with a limited war capability. Even if the United States maintains its present posture, which does not prod the Soviets so sharply into perceiving this strategic avenue, I think it has a considerable likelihood.

Of course, for many people there will be nothing at all novel about this estimate. Proponents of "minimum deterrence," for example, tend to recognize no asymmetry between the strategic situations of East and West; they argue that the credibility of nuclear threats has already collapsed, and that maintaining an illusory "first-strike capability" is a net liability for either side. They propose for the United States the

Frank!
but, "mushy"

¹This is assuming, as throughout, that the Russians see no prospects of a highly successful surprise attack against the United States. In those circumstances, the "insurance" values of a counterforce capability would also be lessened.

11-17-59

-12-

unilateral disarmament of first-strike capability that I have suggested as a possible Russian strategy; they imply that this would be virtually costless for the United States, and worthwhile whether or not the Russians followed suit (though they would expect the Russians to do so as they came to understand the basic logic of nuclear weaponry).

I have been taught at a different school, to recognize the real costs that might be involved if, from its present posture, the United States were to abandon all capability for a first-strike threat.¹ From a position that differs in very many ways from the assumptions of the "minimum deterrence" or most other "arms control" groups, I would argue neither that "minimum deterrence" is necessarily desirable for the United States or logically inevitable for both sides. I am suggesting that it might be virtually imposed upon the United States in negotiation by the Soviets if they were determined to do so: and that they might be. If not (it might have?)

At this point, we must come to grips with the problem: Would their proposal be meaningful? Would it be possible to maintain a large retaliatory capability while reducing drastically "first-strike capability"? I think this can be done, either unilaterally or mutually, although some proposals to accomplish this have pitfalls. It is true that it is difficult to class specific weapons unambiguously as "first-strike" or "second-strike" weapons. It is also true that "first-strike capability" and "second-strike capability" are intimately related, and that a specific measure (say, the

¹This is not to say that I accept the full Herman Kahn position. If the Russians were anxious to halt an armaments race in strategic weapons -- no matter what present advantage they appeared to have with conventional weapons -- I would be loathe to start such a race. I am more optimistic than Kahn about the possibilities of deterring them from aggression with lesser threats.

introduction of a particular weapons system, such as Polaris, or the abandonment of bases in Europe) tends to move both capabilities in the same same direction. Moreover, these "capabilities" depend also upon the opponent's posture; an offensive force consisting entirely of Polaris submarines, for example, would be an excellent "first strike" force, if the opponent's strategic force were soft and on known bases within range of Polaris. It is, in fact, difficult to lower the first-strike capabilities of any system strictly to zero, if the enemy is sufficiently vulnerable.

When all these facts are admitted, it remains true that the distinction between the first-strike and second-strike capabilities of a system is a valid and useful one. Measures differ very widely in their relative effects upon these two aspects of the offensive force (even when they affect both in the same direction), and one measure can offset undesired effects of another. Thus, by a combination of measures (not by a specific expedient) it is definitely possible to improve the second-strike capabilities of an overall offensive system while worsening its first-strike capabilities.

To establish this point, we must decide on an appropriate measurement of these two capabilities. If the index in each case is to be potential damage to the opponent, the goal in question is to keep the level of damage from one's second strike very high, while reducing the prospective damage from one's first strike (so as to reduce the opponent's incentive to pre-empt). A program which simultaneously cut back vulnerable forces and reduced the vulnerability of remaining forces could have these effects. A U.S. example (just to illustrate the principle) might be, removing IRBM's and B-47's from Europe while hardening a lesser number of existing, soft

ICBM's in the ZI. Russian examples might be: a) dismantling or permitting inspection of forward missile sites and advanced staging bases, while hardening sites in the deep interior; b) refraining from equipping the large conventional submarine force with missiles and permitting inspection of these, while launching a small number of nuclear Polaris submarines. The point is not that policies meeting these descriptions must have these effects (to repeat, their actual effect would depend upon the opponent's posture) but that they could have, and that this result could be obvious and demonstrable.

A more significant index of first-strike capability for many purposes is the ability to limit damage to one's own ZI in a first strike, through the counterforce combination of offense, active air defense and civil defense. This is the appropriate measure in connection with the question of limiting one's own incentives for preventive attack (so as to lower the opponent's expectation of an attack, and hence his motives to pre-empt). From this point of view, unless the opponent is highly vulnerable (in the way that both sides are, at the moment!) it is possible to have a formidable retaliatory capability with "first-strike ability" close to zero. In approaching that, any advance in "second-strike ability" could be offset, in its effects upon "first-strike ability," by reductions in air defense or civil defense. In fact, Herman Kahn has maintained that without increasing programs of active defense and civil defense -- in particular, without preparations for strategic evacuation of cities and long occupancy of shelters -- a first-strike ability may become simply unattainable against a well protected enemy as we get into the Sixties. Yet a country which failed to provide for strategic evacuation could

see danger to Europe!

11-17-59

-15-

MAD! (but not with MIRV
or ABM!)

obviously have a large, well-protected retaliatory force capable of imposing great damage upon enemy cities (though not, we assume, upon the hardened enemy offensive force). It would have no incentive for pre-emptive attack. Nor would its opponent.

Thus, Soviet proposals to reduce drastically the possibility of surprise attack while maintaining mutual capability for retaliation would not be meaningless. While the world applauded, they would not come as entirely welcome to our strategic planners. If the United States had continued its present posture, the Soviet proposals would make us acutely conscious, then if never before, of our extreme reliance upon Type II deterrence: the threat to strike first. If they came unexpectedly, catching our decision-makers unprepared even to bargain effectively, then "our countries would just have to step aside and give the people what they want," as the President has put it, and more than just one U.S. strategic objective might get trampled in the rush.

Despite our participation in negotiations about the surprise attack problem, it seems clear that the United States has been constructing an overall defense posture which depends critically upon the continuing feasibility of an effective (U.S.) first strike. It is not the purpose of this paper to comment favorably or unfavorably upon this past policy. I suggest only that it might become untenable: and, if this possibility is accepted, that we might spend some time now in developing preferred policies among its alternatives.

Two premises of my argument must be kept in mind; both must apply before the Soviet strategy described would become likely. First, the United States must develop a second-strike, retaliatory system sufficiently

large and invulnerable to discourage the Soviets from serious planning of a premeditated first strike. This might well imply a defense budget larger than our present one;¹ at the least, this would require considerable improvement in our retaliatory posture. NO

Second, the Russians must anticipate that, under extreme provocation, a U.S. first strike would become a formidable possibility. This would not be the case: a) if the Russians became so confident of the deterrent effect of their own retaliatory force that they no longer believed that the United States could be "provoked" into striking first under any conditions; they would then have no incentive to reassure the United States in any extreme fashion about their own intentions, or even to "disarm" the United States of weapons they were never expected to use. b) if the United States should voluntarily disarm itself of any first-strike capability (vis-a-vis a given SU retaliatory posture), in an effort to reassure the Russians that we would never strike first. This voluntary renunciation of our Type II deterrence (and "insurance"), perhaps undertaken in the hope of persuading the Russians to follow our example, would remove the prime incentive for them to do so. NO

In fact, they might then find it well worthwhile to try using Type II threats against the United States to deter us even from resisting invasion in Europe. This would not be essential to their success, and it might not work (we might have enough confidence in our Type I deterrence to defy their

¹The estimates by the "minimum deterrence" group of the posture needed for reliable deterrence and the cost of providing it seem to understate the problem drastically. Current expenditures on the strategic retaliatory force would almost surely have to rise, at least for the near term. And the cost of providing alternatives to the Type II deterrent threat -- in the form, particularly, of conventional weapons and increased mobility -- would also tend to push up the total defense budget. ?

11-17-59

-17-

threats); but there would now be little risk in trying. They might even be tempted into adventures that risked war more than they guessed, our "disarmament" notwithstanding.

This, of course, comes very close to Herman Kahn's arguments. It would be easy to conclude from it that, pending any genuine Russian moves toward unilateral or bilateral arms control, we have an interest in increasing or at least maintaining our first-strike capability; if for no other reason than to encourage the Russians to initiate such negotiations! Considering budget constraints, however (and the risk of encouraging the Russians to strike, instead of disarming), this would seem to be a low-priority objective, though it does suggest that a unilateral reduction in first-strike capability would be premature.

A stronger implication of the argument in this paper is that the United States could not rely upon being able to maintain Type II deterrence, even if we should undertake a major program to increase U.S. first-strike capability; given the Russian capability to disarm us of those threats (at relatively low cost to themselves) by genuinely reliable arms control agreements (or even, perhaps, by unilateral SU first-strike disarmament). In order that a negotiated arms control settlement should not totally disarm the United States of its ability to protect its allies and promote world order, it would seem highly important to build up alternative deterrent capability -- in the form of "limited war" forces -- which could be effective in the absence of Type II deterrence.

SUMMARY

1. The ability to threaten a nuclear first strike does not play so important a strategic role for Russia as for the United States, given the

11-17-59

-18-

Russian ability to achieve its objectives (e.g., expansion) by other means, including "limited war" capability.

2. ^{is risky for Russia as it is for the United States insofar as it may encourage an opponent to a preventive attack.} An implicit threat, in the form of an actual first-strike capability, This "strain" on its Type I deterrence may seem the more ominous to Russia because it can foresee that other, additional U.S. incentives to strike could also be considerable.

3. If a highly successful SU surprise attack seemed infeasible, and if SU expansionist moves seemed likely (in combination with U.S. fears of an SU first strike) to provoke a U.S. first strike, then the Russian first-strike capability might seem to offer "nothing but risk." Since, in contrast to the United States, the Soviet Union had no urgent need for a first-strike "facade" for threat-purposes, it could cheaply dispense with this "provocative" element of its posture, thus reducing U.S. incentives to strike. This is possible even as a unilateral move, during a period when a U.S. first strike seemed otherwise likely (e.g., an SU invasion of Europe).

4. Prior to such a crisis, the Soviet Union might advance proposals for bilateral arms control limiting the possibility of surprise attack, proposals of a nature that the United States would find almost impossible to resist.

5. If these proposals took us by surprise, we might come out of negotiations without even the guarantees that we actually could have achieved with hard bargaining, if we had been prepared to exploit the genuine Russian

11-17-59

-19-

desire to achieve agreement.

6. Moreover, if these negotiations found us in our present posture (relying for deterrence of SU expansion upon the credibility of our first-strike threats), they could leave us impotent to resist later Soviet advances.

7. The United States should prepare now for the possibility of "serious" arms control negotiation centering upon surprise attack capabilities; and should develop deterrent capabilities alternative to nuclear threats, without necessarily restricting our first-strike capabilities prior to such negotiations.

8. The goal of arms control negotiations initiated by the Russians might be a situation in which (for the near term) neither side could expect, even optimistically, by striking first to prevent the opponent from retaliating on a large scale, equivalent to what would be suffered from the opponent's first strike. The primary U.S. concern in such negotiations would be to establish genuinely reliable guarantees that agreed limitations would apply to the Russians, and to ensure that the U.S. retaliatory capability was not actually weakened.

I do not think that the United States could hope to preserve in these negotiations (or by avoiding such negotiations, if initiated by the Russians) the present credibility of its threats to strike first under Soviet provocation. Also, such results as I have indicated would almost certainly result in a marked decline in second-strike "insurance"; i.e., the ability to alleviate the outcome of a central war that did, after all, occur. This might be compensated by a decline in the likelihood of central war.

11-17-59

-20-

meeting - 1959 (minutes kept?)
no SO ES copy

HK
yo
HA
Would such a settlement be, on balance, desirable for the United States? Only one who (unlike myself) believed that there is no feasible substitute for Type II deterrence would assert that it could not be favorable. But we would need more than that to go on to answer the question: Would it seem desirable for the United States itself to initiate serious proposals limiting the possibility of surprise attack, if it were considerably likely that the Russians would accept? Our answer must rest on an estimate of the consequences of such a settlement beyond the formal terms of the agreement. Proponents of arms control have emphasized the possible favorable consequences for the political atmosphere. The settlement would halt, or at least stabilize, the arms race in strategic weaponry; there have been many doubts (which I have shared) that this was really feasible, but it is hard to believe that it would not be highly desirable.

On the other hand, the effect of such a settlement upon the political climate in the West might well be such as to make unlikely the provision of costly limited war forces to fill the ^{out} plan of Type II deterrence. This could lead to probes by the Soviet Union which could erode our strategic position and, in the end, restore the likelihood of all-out war. Before these took place, our remaining strategic retaliatory system would be even more likely to suffer. Shorn of its role in Type II deterrence, maintained against a contingency now universally regarded as impossible, it is all too possible that we could end up with a system vulnerable even to the reduced Soviet "retaliatory" system. For it appears highly difficult to design a Soviet offensive force so purely "retaliatory" that it would not possess a dangerous first-strike capability if we became sufficiently careless. Thus, even if Russia adhered to the limitations of the settlement, our own

11-17-59

-21-

subsequent policies could sacrifice retaliatory as well as first-strike power, leaving Russia with both.

Both of these possibilities would, at the least, count against our abandoning unilaterally our present first-strike capability before Russia had come to recognize compelling needs for a genuine arms control settlement.

not necessary!